

## **Abstract**

**Norman L. Johnson, Theoretical Division**  
**Los Alamos National Laboratory**  
[nlj@lanl.gov](mailto:nlj@lanl.gov), <http://ishi.lanl.gov>

### **The Science of Diversity and Its Relevance in a Fast Changing World**

One would think that the role diversity plays in many areas of science and society, from ecology to politics to the stock market, would have long ago been understood. Unfortunately, our social views of diversity are in conflict with our mainstream scientific views, largely determined by theory of natural selection - "survival of the fittest." The different roles of diversity are presented within the context of a familiar example (foraging in social insects), and are shown to be just different processes from a developmental perspective. This viewpoint can resolve our own confusion associated with diversity in organizations: is it a moral or business argument? With a larger perspective, we can better understand the advantages and disadvantages of diversity in organizations: Does diversity lead to conflict or does it lead to synergy and better solutions? This analysis is timely because of the importance of diversity in decision-making in complex environments, particularly in times of rapid change - post 9/11.